

# **U.S. DECLARATORY POLICY ON SOVIET SSBN SECURITY: 1970 TO 1985**

John D. Perse



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<p>U.S. defense officials have often said that the Soviet Union expects Western antisubmarine warfare (ASW) forces to attack its ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) and thus is prepared to defend them in war. These Soviet expectations may have been encouraged by U.S. declaratory policy on the subject – that is, the totality of official and other authoritative statements on strategic doctrine and policy, ASW capabilities and tactics, and ASW technology and programs from which Soviet observers reach conclusions about U.S. intentions. This paper reviews U.S. declaratory policy between 1970 and 1985 to determine specifically what that policy has been and then to infer what it has probably meant to the Soviets. It concludes that throughout this period official U.S. declaratory policy has implied an intent to engage in strategic ASW and that the Soviets have had strong reasons to believe that their SSBNs have been and will continue to be targets of U.S. ASW forces.</p>					
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1. Enclosure (1) is forwarded as a matter of possible interest.
2. This Research Memorandum concludes that the totality of official and authoritative U.S. statements since 1970 would lead a reasonable analyst to infer that Soviet SSBNs have been and will continue to be the targets of U.S. ASW forces. Given the importance the Soviets attach to their SSBNs, it seems beyond question that this behavior would have led the Soviets long ago to expect the U.S. to engage in strategic ASW--if the Soviets did not, in any case, impute to us intentions to do what they themselves would do if they possessed the needed capabilities.
3. This conclusion implies that the Soviets have interpreted most U.S. ASW programs and operations in this light, and, over the last decade and a half (or more), have probably taken the measures they thought necessary and feasible to counter a U.S. strategic ASW campaign. Thus, regardless of whatever declaratory or action policy the U.S. adopts with respect to strategic ASW, there is little reason to expect to stimulate gross changes in Soviet strategic policy or plans. In particular, Admiral Watkins's recent descriptions of U.S. strategic ASW intentions in the January 1986 U.S. Naval Institute **Proceedings** almost certainly came as no surprise to the Soviets.



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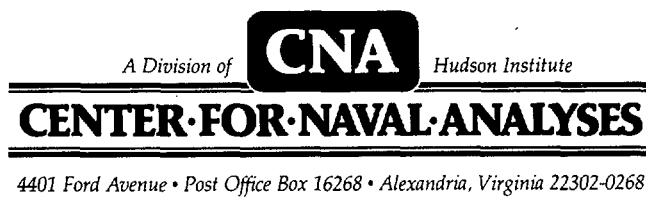
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# **U.S. DECLARATORY POLICY ON SOVIET SSBN SECURITY 1970 TO 1985**

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## ABSTRACT

U.S. defense officials have often said that the Soviet Union expects Western antisubmarine warfare (ASW) forces to attack its ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) and thus is prepared to defend them in war. These Soviet expectations may have been encouraged by U.S. declaratory policy on the subject--that is, the totality of official and other authoritative statements on strategic doctrine and policy, ASW capabilities and tactics, and ASW technology and programs from which Soviet observers reach conclusions about U.S. intentions. This paper reviews U.S. declaratory policy between 1970 and 1985 to determine specifically what that policy has been and then to infer what it has probably meant to the Soviets. It concludes that throughout this period official U.S. declaratory policy has implied an intent to engage in strategic ASW and that the Soviets have had strong reasons to believe that their SSBNs have been and will continue to be targets of U.S. ASW forces.

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## INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. James Watkins, in the Maritime Strategy issue of the U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings (January 1986), stated explicitly and emphatically that in the event of a non-nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, U.S. maritime forces would target, attack, and seek to destroy Soviet ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs). In the first instance, Watkins stated that the aggressive forward movement of U.S. antisubmarine warfare (ASW) forces, "both submarines and maritime patrol aircraft, will force Soviet submarines to retreat into defensive bastions to protect their ballistic missile submarines." In describing the second phase of the maritime strategy--seizing the initiative--Watkins stated that it would be essential for ASW forces to conduct forward operations and "...wage an aggressive campaign against all Soviet submarines, including ballistic missile submarines." Accordingly, Phase III of the maritime strategy--carrying the fight to the enemy--would entail "...tasks...similar to those of earlier phases, but...more aggressively applied as we seek war termination on terms favorable to the United States and its allies. Our goal would be to complete the destruction of all the Soviet fleets which was begun in Phase II...antisubmarine warfare forces would continue to destroy Soviet submarines, including ballistic missile submarines, thus reducing the attractiveness of nuclear escalation by changing the nuclear balance in our favor."

The idea of terminating a U.S.-Soviet war on terms acceptable to the United States is the goal of the overall Maritime Strategy, according to Adm. Watkins. He writes that since the Soviets place great weight on the nuclear correlation of forces, even during the time before nuclear weapons have been used, "maritime forces can influence that correlation...by destroying Soviet ballistic missile submarines..." thereby changing the nuclear correlation of forces. The real issue for Adm. Watkins "is not how the Maritime Strategy is influenced by nuclear weapons, but the reverse: how maritime power can alter the nuclear equation."

To many observers the CNO's remarks seemed an unprecedented strategic departure from existing ideas concerning Soviet SSBN security, and thus, caused the Soviets a great deal of alarm. Such an interpretation is erroneous. While the explicitness of the remarks may have surprised the Soviets, their content, as the following essay demonstrates, surely did not. Rather than breaking new ground, Adm. Watkins was simply providing an explicit rationale for what had long been implied: U.S. maritime forces will engage in strategic ASW/anti-SSBN operations during the conventional phase of a U.S.-Soviet war if one should occur.

Indeed, it is widely recognized by U.S. defense officials that the Soviets are preparing to defend their SSBNs against expected attacks by U.S. ASW forces in war. These Soviet expectations almost certainly have been shaped in part by official U.S. statements on national defense

doctrine, ASW policies and tactics, and ASW programs and capabilities. These statements constitute U.S. "declaratory policy" on anti-SSBN operations. This paper reviews U.S. declaratory policy between 1970 and 1985 to establish what the policy has been, and to infer the degree to which it may have encouraged the Soviets to expect anti-SSBN operations from U.S. ASW forces. In brief, it tries to answer two questions: What has the U.S. said about anti-SSBN operations? And, what have these statements probably meant to the Soviets?

### Scope and Methods

This paper does not attempt to ascertain the totality of U.S. ASW policy, nor does it investigate the coherence or purpose of associated declaratory policy. It simply tries to pinpoint those instances when official U.S. statements regarding ASW policy have been consistent with anti-SSBN operations. It is based on a survey of House and Senate hearings on DOD authorizations, appropriations, procurement, and military posture; reports by the Congressional Budget Office; Arms Control Impact Statements; and the annual reports of the secretary of defense from 1970 to 1985. The survey is believed to be highly representative, if not exhaustive, with regard to statements by U.S. officials that explicitly indicate or imply a strategic ASW/anti-SSBN mission. Quotations appearing in the main text are leading examples of what has been said. Appendixes A through E provide additional official quotations, and semi-official and unofficial but authoritative statements characterizing U.S. policy.

### Findings and Conclusions

Our review of official statements on U.S. national defense doctrine, the U.S. Navy's operational inclinations, and U.S. ASW policies, tactics, and technologies found that:

- A mixed U.S. strategic doctrine has steadily emphasized a counterforce orientation, as indicated by official statements concerning:
  - A "countervailing" strategy involving elements of protracted nuclear war and war termination by nuclear means
  - A U.S. response in kind to Soviet strategic ASW
  - The ability to limit damage and terminate a war through conventional attacks on Soviet SSBNs at sea.

- The operational inclinations, policies, and tactics of the U.S. Navy imply that Soviet SSBNs will be targeted, as indicated by official statements concerning:
  - Area ASW at geographical choke points along the Soviet periphery and U.S. ASW submarine operations within Soviet home waters
  - The inability of U.S. ASW forces to distinguish between Soviet nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs) and SSBNs.
- U.S. ASW technologies and programs are described in terms that imply anti-SSBN missions and capabilities. This literature indicates:
  - That Soviet SSBNs are considered by U.S. officials to be part of the undersea threat to be countered
  - The development of technologies that threaten both Soviet SSNs and SSBNs (or the inability to develop technologies that only threaten SSNs)
  - An implied intention to focus on SSBNs as a matter of policy
  - The development of multi-capable "ASW teams" that threaten both SSNs and SSBNs.

Before Adm. Watkins's explicit statements, U.S. declaratory policy has implied an intent to engage in strategic ASW. To the Soviets, the few denials of such a mission, (for example, those in the Arms Control Impact Statements from 1980 to 1982) probably lack plausibility when considered against the broad background of official statements suggesting otherwise. In any event, such a denial was absent in the FY 1983 Arms Control Impact Statement. Thus, on the basis of U.S. declaratory policy as detailed in this review, it was logical and legitimate for the Soviets to conclude that their SSBN force has long been a target of U.S. ASW systems and will be attacked if a war breaks out.

#### BACKGROUND

It is recognized that Soviet naval policies of the 1970s and early 1980s reflected perceptions of threat and opportunity formed in the 1960s. During the 1960s, U.S. policy changed. Before 1965, the U.S. expressed its intentions to attack Soviet ballistic submarines in wartime in order to limit the damage they might inflict on the nation

[1, 2]. Then, in February 1965, U.S. strategic policy officially changed from damage limitation to mutual assured destruction [3]. It is doubtful that the Soviets placed much confidence in this apparent change. If nothing else, the content of U.S. declaratory policy in the years that followed may have prompted Soviet skepticism.

#### SOVIET CONCERN FOR SSBN SECURITY

The most prominent feature of U.S. declaratory policy on strategic ASW has been its departure point: consistent statements that the Soviets are concerned with SSBN security. For instance, Director of Naval Intelligence Adm. John Butts, in prepared remarks during FY 1986 authorization hearings, stated that during the next decade, Soviet building programs "...will result in a Soviet submarine force which is predominantly nuclear powered, operationally more flexible, and significantly better able to fight prolonged, short-range submarine engagements--especially in defense of Soviet SSBNs" [4]. In describing Soviet programmatic and operational developments, Adm. Butts stated that, while Soviet naval forces are structured to fight in any environment, "initial wartime operations would be conducted with a view toward escalation. Hence...the primary task is to deploy and protect the SSBN force.... Because of the importance they ascribe to the SSBN force, the Soviets plan to support and protect it through an echeloned defense in depth" [4, p. 4367]. In particular, Adm. Butts described the units that participated in the 1984 Soviet exercise SPRINGEX as being "...deployed to control the seaward approaches to the USSR and to protect the Soviet SSBN force" [4, p. 4367].

That Soviet programmatic and operational developments were designed in part to enhance the security of their SSBN fleet was a point made several years ago by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger. In February 1982 he stated that:

The Soviets have invested heavily in technologically advanced platforms, sensors, and weapons for submarine and antisubmarine warfare. Many features of these forces, taken together with our observations of Soviet naval exercises, indicate that their concept of operation calls for Soviet antisubmarine warfare forces to be concentrated in home waters in support of newer classes of Soviet ballistic missile submarines [5].

Similarly, RAdm. Sumner Shapiro, then Director of Naval Intelligence, stated in March 1981 that Soviet naval developments added up to "extensive use of new units to support their own SSBNs. In the near term, KIEV, KIROV, [and] UDALOY [surface ships, and] ALFA and VICTOR III SSNs are likely candidates for this mission" [6]. Defense Secretary Harold Brown also recognized this Soviet objective when he

acknowledged that "the Soviets continue their efforts to develop an antisubmarine warfare capability both against alliance SSBNs and in the protection of their own SSBNs" (emphasis added) [7].

Discussions of Soviet SSBN deployment practices have also been consistent with the idea that the Soviets are concerned with SSBN security. In early 1982, RAdm. Shapiro, in describing the Typhoon, stated that "more of them can remain in the sanctuary of their own home waters, they do not have to come out into the Atlantic and the Pacific where they could be more easily detected and localized, and destroyed by ASW forces" [8]. In a more recent example, Adm. Butts stated that "although...forward Delta deployments reduce missile flight time compared to that from normal northern latitude patrol areas, they also increase the Delta's vulnerability to U.S. ASW forces..." [4, p. 4365].

Such observations may strike a Western reader as essentially neutral with respect to U.S. intentions. But to Soviet observers, accustomed to "reading between the lines," these statements by senior U.S. spokesmen probably imply an officially sanctioned anti-SSBN mission for U.S. ASW forces. On none of the occasions when this Soviet concern has been discussed has anyone said that the U.S. did not intend to attack Soviet SSBNs. Beyond this doubtless eloquent silence, several statements (such as the following one made in 1977 by RAdm. Donald Harvey, the Director of Naval Intelligence) explicitly indicate that "the sea areas which the Soviets seek to selectively control have...no doubt been prompted by the need to...protect their own ballistic missile submarines from attack by Western ASW forces" (emphasis added) [9]. More recently, the Office of Naval Intelligence, in a public information brochure on the Soviet Navy (January 1981), stated:

The Soviets are...concerned with the protection of their own SSBNs and have developed forces to attack Western ASW forces in a "defense in depth" concept.... In support of this mission, the Soviet Navy has developed several classes of large ASW ships which, along with aircraft and submarines, appear to be intended to enhance the survivability of Soviet submarines (emphasis added) [10].

The 1985 version of the information brochure repeated this Soviet concern [11]. It also ascribed an SSBN protection mission to the Soviet conventional aircraft carriers [11, p. 18], and concluded quite simply that "in war time, initial Soviet naval operations in the Atlantic would focus on insuring the survival of their SSBN..." [11, p. 24].

The Soviets have almost certainly interpreted these remarks as reflecting anti-SSBN intent, if only because the broader pattern of declaratory policy seems to allow no other interpretation. The remainder of this paper surveys that pattern in statements of U.S. national defense doctrine, ASW policies and tactics, and ASW programs and capabilities.

## U.S. NATIONAL DEFENSE DOCTRINE

U.S. national defense doctrine serves as the background against which the Soviets base their interpretations of operations, policies, and tactics. In the case of strategic ASW, U.S. doctrine has generally been clearcut, with occasional telling ambiguities. On the one hand, the U.S. has long espoused a mixed countervalue-counterforce strategic policy, which has tended to evolve slowly toward increased emphasis on counterforce. On the other hand, during the Carter administration, at least, the U.S. explicitly renounced any intention to engage in strategic ASW, even though the logic of a counterforce doctrine would seem to require such a mission.

The ambiguous nature of U.S. strategic policy was perpetuated in the Carter administration's "countervailing" strategy, which emphasized both counterforce and countervalue targeting. According to Defense Secretary Brown in January 1981:

Our countervailing strategy today is a natural evolution of the conceptual foundations built over a generation by men like Robert McNamara and James Schlesinger. The United States has never, at least since nuclear weapons were available in significant numbers, had a strategy based simply and solely on reflexive, massive attacks on Soviet cities and populations [12].

Thus, since the McNamara era, U.S. nuclear strategy has involved a combination of countervalue (assured destruction) and counterforce (damage limitation, war fighting, and war termination).

The mixed doctrine, falling somewhere between a "full first strike" capability and a "cities only" capability [13], continues to hold today, and its counterforce aspects have been increasingly emphasized (see appendix A). For example, Secretary Weinberger has suggested that the U.S. must be capable of fighting a protracted nuclear war in order to convince Moscow that American forces could survive an initial attack and in this way deter the Soviets from launching such a strike [14, 15]. According to the secretary's 1982 Posture Statement, U.S. nuclear forces must, in part, serve to impose termination of a major war on terms favorable to the U.S. [5, p. I-19]. This sentiment is echoed in the secretary's FY 1986 Annual Report to Congress.

In March 1982, remarks by Navy Secretary John Lehman left little doubt that U.S. Naval general-purpose forces would target Soviet SSBNs at sea and in port for purposes of war termination:

If one...wants to limit the damage and bring a nuclear war that broke out to a close as rapidly as possible, then the ability to attrite their SSBMs [sic], whether they are sitting in port [deleted] is important as a war termination element. There general purpose forces are used strategically to try to terminate the war [16].

The possibility that the U.S. would threaten Soviet SSBNs was also raised in connection with the strategy of "horizontal escalation." One 1981 interpretation of horizontal escalation has the U.S. compensating for weakness ashore in Southwest Asia by inflicting "catastrophic Soviet naval losses" worldwide through exploitation of its "mastery in underwater warfare." According to this argument, the Soviet Union, which is weaker at sea (especially in underwater warfare), could be disciplined in a period of extreme crisis by a combination of Western moves, the major combat action of which is a "naval campaign, especially [in] underwater warfare..." [17]. Horizontal escalation has played a prominent role in public discussions of the defense policies of the Reagan administration. For the Soviets, references to "underwater warfare" and "catastrophic losses" almost certainly imply threats to their SSBN force.

Besides such statements relating strategic ASW to war- and crisis-termination, the Soviets have had other evidence from which to infer U.S. anti-SSBN intentions. Consider the U.S. position on "responding in kind." U.S. officials have often stated that a primary mission of the Soviet ASW force is to counter U.S. SSBNs.<sup>1</sup> And since 1974, the U.S. position has been that "...threats to our strategic forces, whether limited or large scale, might well call for an option to respond in kind against the attacker's military forces" (emphasis added) [24]. The combination of these two statements would logically lead Soviet observers to conclude that an American "response in kind" to expected Soviet strategic ASW would be to target Soviet SSBNs in return.

In short, the U.S. countervailing nuclear strategy by implication fosters the conclusion that the U.S. intends to attack the Soviet SSBN force in war.

In sharp contrast to this inference drawn from the bulk of official statements stand the Carter administration's FY 1980 and 1981 Arms Control Impact Statements (ACIS). The FY 1980 ACIS states that "...the U.S. has a declaratory policy of not developing an anti-SSBN capability" [25]. The FY 1981 edition repeats this position with a qualifier: "US

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1. For examples see [18-23].

policy forswears a disarming first strike against Soviet strategic nuclear forces, including SSBNs. Regardless of policy, U.S. leaders might not have a great degree of confidence that ASW systems would be highly effective in a strategic ASW role" [26]. (In other words, the U.S. might not feel it possessed the ASW capabilities to execute a coordinated attack against all deployed Soviet SSBNs before they could fire their missiles--an extremely demanding requirement.) The first ACIS submitted by the Reagan administration, for FY 1982, deletes some of the words that appeared in the FY 1981 ACIS. It reads: "US policy forswears a disarming first strike against Soviet strategic nuclear forces, including SSBNs. And regardless of policy, US leaders might not have a great degree of confidence [deleted]" [27]. And in the FY 1983 statement, denials of a strategic ASW mission simply disappear [28].

It is difficult to estimate exactly what Soviet "Americanologists" may have concluded from these clearly atypical statements from the Carter years. But generally speaking, the two statements seem scarcely to constitute serious reassurance that the U.S. does not intend to go after Soviet SSBNs. Indeed, the silence on the subject in the FY 1983 ACIS probably increased Soviet concern.

#### THE U.S. NAVY'S OPERATIONAL INCLINATIONS AND ASW POLICIES AND TACTICS

The previous section has shown, in a general way, how U.S. national defense statements almost certainly have led the Soviets to believe that their SSBNs are potential targets of U.S. ASW forces. Official statements reflecting the Navy's operational inclinations and the resulting ASW policies and tactics buttress such beliefs. These statements reveal the expected proximity of combat at sea to the deployment areas of Soviet sea-based strategic systems, blur the distinctions between offensive and defensive mission concepts, and expose the ambiguities between strategic and tactical ASW.

In the literature, ASW is divided into strategic operations against enemy ballistic missile submarines, and tactical operations against enemy attack submarines. Tactical ASW is further divided into local and area operations. Local operations involve up-close protection of surface vessels against attacking submarines, and area operations involve submarines and surveillance assets deployed at geographical choke points, some close to Soviet home waters. This concept of area ASW is where ambiguities between tactical and strategic ASW arise.

There can be little doubt that the operational inclinations of the U.S. Navy, which, according to Adm. Thomas Hayward, are "predicated upon, and consistent with, the U.S. national defense strategy" [29], emphasize offensive operations in forward areas close to Soviet home waters (see appendix B) to facilitate control of the seas (see appendix C). In fact, according to a Congressional Budget Office report, sea control not only requires defensive operations to defend the sea lines of communication (SLOCs), "but also offensive naval attacks on Soviet forces near Soviet territory or bases..." [30].



Just as overall naval strategy emphasizes forward-area operations, so too does area ASW. "Historically, submarines have proven to be the greatest threat to our ability to control the seas and carry out naval operations" [23, p. 1943]. Therefore, in area ASW the Navy intends "...to engage the enemy submarines in the forward areas as far from our sea lines of communication and forces as possible.... By forward areas, we mean areas near the potential enemy's bases and homeland" [23, p. 1944]. That is, the number one response to the Soviet submarine threat is to engage the enemy as far forward as possible [23, pp. 1956-57].

The central aspect of area ASW is the "barrier" concept, which would be particularly effective in forward areas [31]. Composed of attack submarines, ASW aircraft, and surveillance systems and employed at geographical choke points close to Soviet home waters, ASW barriers are designed to prevent Soviet attack submarines from transiting to open ocean areas. By employing such barriers, the U.S. would

try to hold the Soviets as far north in the Norwegian Sea as possible. It is in this area that we can inflict the greatest losses on Soviet submarines...as they attempt to transit the Greenland-Iceland-Norway gap to and from their Northern Fleet bases [32].

Thus, area ASW missions would hope to bottle up Soviet submarines in confined areas. VAdm. Daniel Murphy, Director of ASW and Ocean Surveillance Programs in 1976, characterized the operations described above as tactical ASW [23, pp. 1942-43].

Yet, tactical ASW (the detection, localization, and destruction of enemy attack submarines) is not clearly defined in practice. Simply stated in a prepared DOD answer: "...There is no practical way...to distinguish strategic (ballistic missile submarine) and tactical (general purpose submarine) ASW activities" [33]. Therefore, according to Adm. Murphy, "in a war-fighting situation we would not be in a position of differentiating their attack submarines from their SSBNs" [20, p. 1972]. A year later VAdm. Robert Kaufman baldly stated that in a conventional war all enemy submarines would be considered "fair game" [34]. More recently, in response to a question from Senator Cohen regarding the possibility of "distinguishing between an attack submarine or a strategic submarine when conducting ASW," Adm. Lee Baggett, Director of Naval Warfare, replied: "I don't believe you could effectively.... I think it would be a stricture that would be very, very onerous from the standpoint of ASW. I don't believe you could make a distinction in a combat environment--even prehostilities--with certainty to distinguish between SSBNs and attack submarines. It is going to get worse in the future.... I think you would not be able...to make that distinction" [4, p. 4399].

Moreover, the major mission of U.S. ASW submarines is not confined to barrier operations along the periphery of Soviet home waters, but also includes offensive operations within these home waters [9, p. 201]. In an attempt to seek out and destroy Soviet naval forces in their coastal waters [35], "specific SSN wartime assignments...will include forward area offensive operations" (emphasis added) [36].<sup>1</sup> Secretary Lehman in 1982 emphasized that "the only way you can really keep them [the Soviets] above the GIUK gap is to be up there [in the Norwegian Sea] forcing them onto the defensive..." [38].<sup>2</sup> Two years later, in 1984, Secretary Lehman reiterated this point: "We have to move up north of the GIUK gap. We have to control the Norwegian Sea and force them back into the defensive further north, under the ice, to use their attack subs to protect their nuclear missile submarines..." [40]. This vein of argument goes well back into the 1970s. For example, in 1976, RAdm. R. L. Kellen stated:

The ASW submarine, when you look at deployment schemes, often puts itself in and operates in areas which are very contiguous with the home bases of an adversary. It would perhaps be an extremely good tactic to have the ability to be able to launch a strike at high value targets from various areas right at their door [41].

The Soviets would undoubtedly have interpreted the phrase "high value targets" as including their SSBNs in port or in home waters where U.S. attack submarines would be deployed. Adm. Nils Thunman's statement, almost 10 years later, that "the maritime strategy calls for the majority of our...SSNs...to go forward immediately at the beginning of any hostilities with the Soviets to sink his fleet...and now with the advent of the Tomahawk cruise missile, to attack his land bases" [4, p. 4493] probably served to reinforce the Soviet interpretation.

The effect of these U.S. operations would be to deny any sanctuary at sea to Soviet forces of any kind.<sup>3</sup> In 1979, Adm. Hayward made this point explicitly:

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1. See also [37].

2. According to Harold Brown, "The U.S. has no intention of conceding the Norwegian Sea to the Soviets" [39].

3. According to a consultant to the House International Relations Committee, "it is unlikely that the United States, despite high risks, will permit either Soviet SSBNs or SSNs a safe sanctuary inside the GIUK gap...all types of Soviet submarines that are trapped inside NATO-controlled barriers, as well as submarines on the open oceans, at launch stations near U.S. coasts, and in transit are subject to attack, even during a non-nuclear conflict" [42]. Thus, according to a DOD official, if a war were to break out, the Soviets would probably lose all 350 of their submarines [43]. This total, according to the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program for 1979, would necessarily include attack and ballistic missile submarines [44].

[The U.S. Navy must] exploit Soviet geographic disadvantages and continue to deploy naval forces in locales which provide us strategic advantage. It is important that we make the Soviets understand that in war there will be no sanctuaries for their forces (emphasis added) [35, p. 1255].

Statements regarding the inability to distinguish between Soviet submarine types, coupled with the assignment to U.S. naval forces of offensive ASW missions within confined Soviet home waters, have tended to blur the lines between offensive and defensive missions. Secretary Lehman has stated that as part of the SLOC-defense effort, the U.S. must be able to gain control of the Norwegian Sea [38]. Gaining control of the Norwegian Sea, however, would threaten Soviet control of the Kola Peninsula, and according to Lehman, the Soviets would "...lose their whole strategic submarine fleet if they lose Kola" [38].

#### ASW TECHNOLOGIES AND PROGRAMS

Specific technologies and programs are essential to specific operational policies and tactics. As statements concerning U.S. defense doctrine and ASW policies encourage Soviet perceptions of a U.S. strategic ASW mission, so too do statements concerning U.S. ASW capabilities and programs (see appendix D). In a number of cases, they do so with even greater force.

The ambiguity between strategic and tactical ASW can be especially striking in discussions of technology.<sup>1</sup> Adm. Murphy stated that the Navy was buying and developing tactical ASW systems "that work [deleted] against an SSBN or a Soviet SSN" [23, p. 1972]. According to the FY 1980 Arms Control Impact Statement, Soviet ballistic missile submarines would be "subject to the same detection and localization procedures as are torpedo attack and cruise missile submarines" [25].

Additionally, the Soviets have evidence that as a matter of policy the U.S. does not intend to distinguish between SSBNs and non-SSBNs. To begin with, there are frequent instances of official statements on ASW programs in general, which inescapably must reinforce Soviet beliefs that the U.S. intends to target Soviet SSBNs. Secretary Weinberger, for example, specifically named Soviet Typhoon- and Delta-class SSBNs as part of the Soviet undersea threat when he stated that "accordingly, we are pursuing several programs that will strengthen our capability to defeat the undersea threat" [5, p. III-23]. There is nothing new in

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1. "...emerging weapons, sensors, and reconnaissance technology will offer the potential for advanced submarine designs which effectively prevent any...distinction" between strategic and tactical ASW [45].

this. More than a decade earlier, RAdm. P. B. Armstrong, Manager of the ASW Systems Project Office, stated:

In regards to the threat, and particularly to the SLBM threat or YANKEE threat...we are now required to spend more time with dedicated forces in protecting the waters close to the Pacific and Atlantic coasts which...supports the idea that we must be capable of being responsive to the threat of the other fellow's weapon systems (emphasis added) [46].

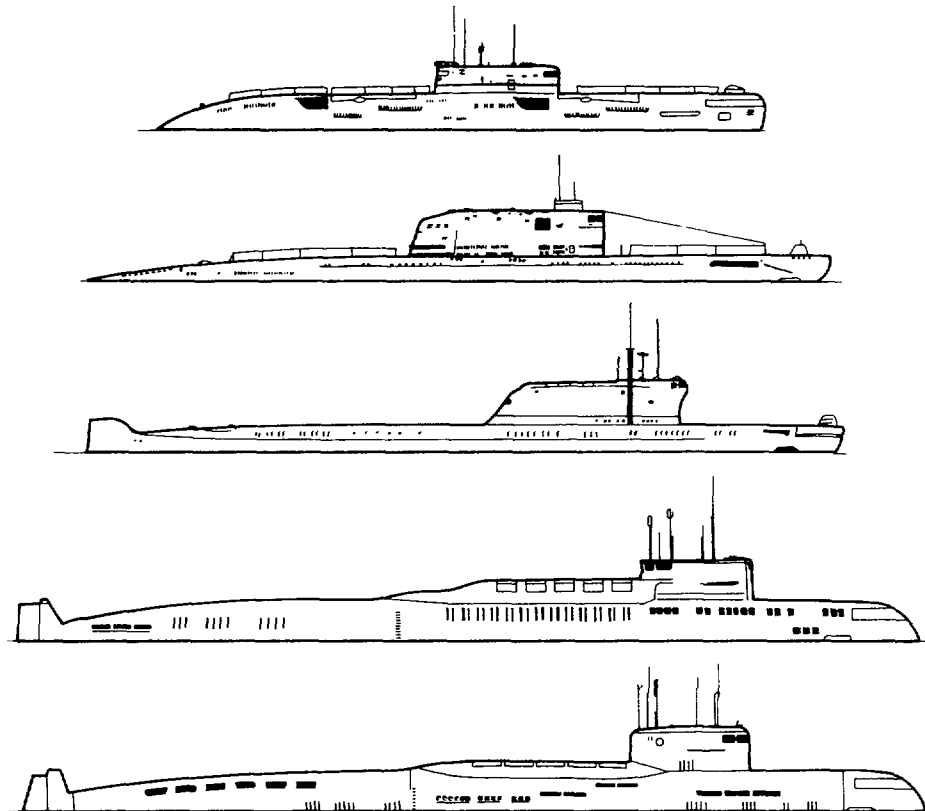
This official tendency to include, or even emphasize, SSBNs as the target of ASW programs has been reflected in the advertising of defense contractors. Figure 1 appeared in a number of defense periodicals in late 1982.<sup>1</sup> The objects on which the text's "passive data [processing] breakthrough after breakthrough" are graphically brought to bear include a Juliett guided-missile submarine (top), followed by four ballistic missile boats--a Golf, a Hotel, a Yankee, and a Delta. It seems safe to say that Soviet analysts could hardly ignore the "hints" of U.S. intentions that are suggested in this way.

Individual ASW programs are probably not as telling to the Soviets as the totality of the U.S. ASW efforts. The FY 1979 ACIS acknowledged that although a single ASW program could not raise Soviet concerns over the survivability of their SSBN force, a combination of programs, involving sensors and attack mechanisms on a variety of air, surface, and undersea platforms, could [47]. Yet this combination, this ASW "team" effort, is precisely what DOD and Navy officials emphasize when discussing ASW programs and technologies (see appendix E).

It is this combination of ASW programs that the U.S. has been improving. Adm. Murphy in 1976 stated that the Navy is "constantly striving to improve our ASW capabilities, particularly in our concepts, tactics, platforms, and equipment" [23, p. 1944]. Also in 1976, Dr. Malcolm Currier, Director of Defense Research and Engineering, announced that the U.S. was "on the threshold of vastly improved ASW capability to counter the growing numbers of Soviet nuclear attack and fleet ballistic missile submarines" (emphasis added)" [48]. By 1980 the threshold was crossed, according the William Perry, Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering. Perry declared that "we have, in the U.S., developed technologies which, if deployed in large quantities, could put a portion of the Soviet SLBM force at risk" [49]. In short, "the U.S. has pursued ASW technology vigorously, and at high expenditure levels, for many years...thus, over the long term, significant improvement in U.S. ASW systems, or in techniques for their use, might diminish Soviet confidence in SSBN security" (emphasis added) [26, p. 110].

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1. Sea Power, Oct 1982, among others.



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**FIG. 1: ADVERTISEMENT APPEARING IN  
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The diminished Soviet confidence in SSBN security leads to what U.S. officials see as the Soviet intent to deploy their ballistic missile submarines under the Arctic ice. In late 1984, Aviation Week and Space Technology reported: "The Soviet Union has developed the ability to fire submarine-launched ballistic missiles through the Arctic ice cap. This new capability enables Soviet missile-firing submarines to escape detection by hiding under the north polar ice where the U.S. has little or no ability to detect and counter them" [50, p. 16]. In a strictly "official" vein, RAdm. Butts made the same point in congressional hearings, in both 1984 and 1985, that the Soviets were equipping some of their newer SSBNs for under-ice operations [4, p. 4363], and that the "Typhoon's ice-penetrating features clearly demonstrate the Soviet's firm commitment to operating under the ice" [51, pp. 5-6]. According to Defense Daily, U.S. "intelligence leaders" informed Congress that the Soviet Typhoon is built so that it is ideally suited for under-ice operations [52, p. 2].

With regard to ASW technologies and programs, "the Navy...has taken steps to improve its ability to operate under the Arctic ice, where...Soviet strategic submarines would try to hide" [53]. Remarks by Adm. Watkins on 18 May 1983, widely reported in the press on 19 May [54, 55, 56], essentially verified that the U.S. has acquired and practiced the capability to attack Soviet SSBNs, including those under Arctic ice. Referring to an April 1985 visit by Adm. Watkins to an attack submarine operating under the ice, a Navy official, quoted in the New York Times, stated that "'an effort was made to make sure that the word got out about the trip'" in order to send a signal to the Soviets about the Navy's intention to improve its ability to operate in polar regions [53].

Signals regarding the Navy's ability to operate under the ice have been sent through other statements as well. Significantly, in 1984 Adm. Watkins stated that "we have run over the past 2 years a number of war games focussing on Arctic submarine warfare" [40, p. 3883]. Similarly, Melvyn Paisley remarked that the first sustained Arctic ASW exercise would take place in 1985 [4, p. 4709].

Official discussions about U.S. attack submarine programs lend additional weight to the view that the U.S. is improving its capabilities to operate under the ice in order to threaten Soviet SSBNs. Secretary Weinberger, in discussing the fact that the SSN remains an integral part of the U.S. forward offensive strategy, especially for ASW operations, stated that areas of potential combat included the ice-covered Arctic [57]. In the FY 1986 authorization hearings, VAdm. Nils Thunman, Deputy CNO for Submarine Warfare, stated that "entirely new mission capabilities" had been added to the SSN-688 class. He added that "these ships will...be constructed...with the necessary modifications to permit operations in the stressful Arctic theater" [4, p. 4499]. During the same hearings, Secretary Paisley remarked that "major thrusts in the technology base for combat control and weapons

include advances...and development of concepts for Arctic warfare" [4, p. 4711]. According to VAdm. Thunman, the SSN-21 Seawolf class, a new SSN program currently being pursued by the Navy, would have an even better Arctic warfare capability than the SSN-688 class, "not only in its hull configuration, but in the systems we have put into its combat system" [40, p. 4169].

#### CONCLUSION

Official statements on U.S. strategic doctrine, U.S. Navy operational inclinations, policies and tactics, and U.S. technologies and programs since the early 1970s have strongly implied that U.S. maritime forces will engage in strategic ASW/anti-SSBN operations during the conventional phase of a U.S.-Soviet war. From the Soviet point of view, Adm. Watkins's remarks in January 1986, having roots deep in the evolution of contemporary Naval strategy, did not signal a strategic departure from existing ideas concerning Soviet SSBN security. Rather, they were an explicit confirmation of heretofore implied intentions of the U.S. government, perhaps because the basic message had long ago been delivered piecemeal anyway.

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## APPENDIX A

### STATEMENTS EMPHASIZING THE COUNTERFORCE ASPECTS OF U.S. STRATEGIC DOCTRINE

Prepared DOD response--"U.S. strategic forces are not procured for a damage-limitation mission.... However, should a nuclear war occur, our forces may be utilized to limit damage to the United States...in addition to being used to destroy resources which contribute to the postwar power, influence, and recovery capability of the enemy" (emphasis added). U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. Fiscal Year 1978 Authorization for Military Procurement, Part 1, Jan-Feb 1977, p. 554

Prepared DOD response--"...U.S. policy has been correct in developing a posture in which a degree of war-fighting capability is desirable in order to enhance deterrence...." U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. Fiscal Year 1978 Authorization for Military Procurement, Part 1, Jan-Feb 1977, p. 571

"Because the Soviets may define victory in part, in terms of the overall post-war military balance, we will give special attention, in implementing the countervailing strategy, to more effective and more flexible targeting of the full range of military capabilities..." (emphasis added). U.S. Department of Defense. Fiscal Year 1982 Annual Report of Secretary of Defense, Harold Brown, Jan 1981, p. 67

"...the destruction of enemy ballistic-missile submarines for the purpose of limiting damage to the U.S. in the event of a nuclear war has been and remains an important priority of the U.S. antisubmarine warfare effort." Wit, Joel. "Advances in Antisubmarine Warfare." Scientific American 244 (Feb 1981): 31

"The antistrategic ASW stance is valid only if there is a common and total adherence to a MAD strategy by the USSR and the United States. This is patently not the case. After 35 years we have not only failed to 'educate' the Soviets to accept MAD but have begun to adopt aspects of their...warfighting/damage-limiting strategy...and it is doubtful if the United States ever had a pure MAD strategy." Therefore, "the United States must have a clearly stated and understood strategic ASW policy for the wartime destruction of the Soviet SSBN force." Caldwell, Hamlin. "The Empty Silo--Strategic ASW." Naval War College Review 34 (Sep-Oct 1981): 8, 13

## APPENDIX B

### STATEMENTS ON OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS CLOSE TO SOVIET HOME WATERS

Secretary of the Navy John Lehman--"We must have a forward strategy.... Our adversaries must know that if they initiate hostilities at sea, it is they who will be put on the defensive.... Our forces must be offensively capable and be seen as such by our adversaries." U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Armed Services. Fiscal Year 1983 Hearings on Military Posture and H.R. 5968, Part 1, Feb-Mar 1982, p. 563

John Lehman--"The vulnerability of the Soviets as a maritime power is the confined access from their bases to the open seas. A forward strategy permits us to exploit this weakness.... In wartime, we would operate as far forward as feasible." U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Appropriations. Department of Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1983 Hearings, Part 2, Mar 1982, p. 127

VAdm. M.S. Holcomb, Director, Navy Program Planning--"Offensive capability permits us to use geography to our advantage and force an enemy to concentrate its naval forces in or near home waters." U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. Fiscal Year 1982 Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations Hearings, Part 4, Mar 1981, p. 1943

Adm. Thomas Hayward, Chief of Naval Operations--"Our capabilities must be sufficient to put at risk the survivability of Soviet maritime forces even in their coastal waters and bases." U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Appropriations. Department of Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1980 Hearings, Part 2, Apr 1979, p. 22

For a discussion of inadvertent anti-SSBN operations by U.S. conventional forces in a conventional war, which are a function of offensive operations close to Soviet home waters, see: Posen, Barry. "Inadvertent Nuclear War? Escalation and NATO's Northern Flank." International Security 7 (Fall 1982): 28-54. Posen's central theme is that "the offensive operations preferred by the American military, the ambiguities of offense and defense that geography and technology present, and the difficulties raised by the fog of war make it likely that Soviet strategic forces will be placed in some jeopardy in an East-West conventional war" (p. 35). In short, "the option of avoiding attacks on Soviet SSBNs may not exist" (p. 42).

## APPENDIX C

### STATEMENTS THAT OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS FACILITATE SEA CONTROL

Arthur Pennington, from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense, Program Analysis and Evaluation, has explicitly stated that ASW forces for the destruction of Soviet SSBNs are one aspect of the Navy's mission of controlling the sea. U.S. Congress, Senate. Committee on Armed Services. Fiscal Year 1977 Authorization for Military Procurement Hearings, Part 4, Feb 1976, p. 1981

Adm. James L. Holloway, III, Chief of Naval Operations-- (paraphrase)--To maintain U.S. access to allies, we must be prepared to fight at enemy borders. This requires control of the SLOCs and the means to defeat the Soviet Navy by offensive actions in their home bases. U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. Fiscal Year 1979 Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations Hearings, Part 5, Mar-Apr 1978, p. 4188

Adm. Thomas Hayward, Chief of Naval Operations--" ...the most effective way we can gain and maintain control of the seas is by developing a navy that has offensive capability, so that we can take the initiative--put the Soviets on the defensive and keep them on the defensive, where they have to operate close to their shorelines...." U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. Fiscal Year 1981 Department of Defense Authorization for Appropriations Hearings, Part 2, Feb-Mar 1980, p. 788

## APPENDIX D

### STATEMENTS ON ASW CAPABILITIES AND PROGRAMS IMPLYING AN ANTI-SSBN MISSION

Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger--"Attack subs are potentially the most effective element of our varied ASW forces. Nuclear-powered attack submarines (SSNs), because they are uniquely able to operate covertly, can be used to establish effective ASW barriers in waters which are otherwise under the control of enemy surface and air forces...." U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Appropriations. Department of Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1975 Hearings, Part 1, Mar 1974, p. 159

Dr. George Heilmeyer, Director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)--"The deployment of a longer range missile on the Soviet DELTA class submarine means that we must cover much larger ocean areas with our submarine detection systems." U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. Fiscal Year 1978 Authorization for Military Procurement Hearings, Part 9, Mar 1977, p. 6188

"It is in the area of defense against potential enemy submarines that the U.S. has maintained a substantial technical lead, aided by geography. Ideally, the U.S. Navy's perfect ASW system would be able to track Soviet submarines from their home bases and during their entire deployment, whether they be Soviet ballistic missile firing submarines or SSNs. For the North Atlantic Ocean, this goal is near at hand." Booda, Larry. "Undersea Warfare: A Stable Segment of the U.S. Defense Posture." Defense and Foreign Affairs Digest 6 (May 1978): 7

"The United States has so improved its underwater detection systems that it may eventually be possible to destroy the entire Soviet ballistic missile-firing submarine fleet, according to a study by the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress." Washington Post, 10 Jan 1979, p. A-5

"Since the first USSR deployment of SSBNs, a large fraction of the SSBN deployed force has been subject to SOSUS detection and tracking [deleted]." U.S. Congress. Committees on Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations. Fiscal Year 1980 Arms Control Impact Statements, Mar 1979, p. 109

RAdm. Jeffrey Metzel--"The attack submarine is considered to be our most effective single antisubmarine platform. It contributes to both area and local ASW and is particularly valuable in that forward area...it can go into the enemy's backyard." U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. Fiscal Year 1980 Department of Defense



Authorization for Appropriations Hearings, Part 6, Mar-Apr 1979,  
pp. 2927, 2933

Adm. Thomas Hayward, Chief of Naval Operations--"On the offensive side, U.S. forces must be able to establish minefields at geographic choke points and near Soviet naval bases." U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Appropriations. Department of Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1980 Hearings, Part 2, Apr 1979, p. 35

In short, the U.S. Navy "...possesses a significant capability to mount offensive strikes...against forces at sea, including Soviet ships and planes capable of attacking the sea lanes, as well as the Soviet SSBN force." (Emphasis added.) U.S. Congressional Budget Office. Shaping the General Purpose Navy of the Eighties. CBO Report, Budget Issue Paper for Fiscal Year 1981, Jan 1980, p. 22

"U.S. naval doctrine calls for the use of the submarine in several highly dangerous wartime missions. One is the penetration of Soviet home waters to destroy naval facilities and to hunt down and sink the Soviet Delta-class submarines..." (emphasis added). Burton, John C. "Quietly Conventional." Defense and Foreign Affairs 8 (Nov 1980): 19

"...both the U.S. and the Soviets have increased their emphasis on the many facets of ASW. The primary targets, of course, are the SSBNs. Their detection and tracking form the major aspect of ASW...." Booda, Larry. "Antisubmarine Warfare Reacts to Strategic Indicators." Sea Technology 22 (Nov 1981): 10-11

VAdm. Robert Walters, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations--"The ability of our multi-mission, nuclear powered, attack submarines to operate covertly and with high survivability makes them extremely valuable for forward area operations." U.S. Congress. House. Committee on Appropriations. Department of Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1983 Hearings, Part 4, Mar 1982, p. 143.

## APPENDIX E

### STATEMENTS EMPHASIZING THE ASW "TEAM" CONCEPT

Dr. Malcolm Currie, Director of Defense Research and Engineering--  
"Antisubmarine warfare is a very complex area.... It consists of a  
great number of efforts, a great number of devices, which must somehow  
be integrated into an overall capability." U.S. Congress. Senate.  
Committee on Armed Services. Fiscal Year 1977 Authorization for  
Military Procurement Hearings, Part 4, Feb 1976, p. 1941

Dr. Malcolm Currie--"Our ASW related research and development must  
focus on means for locating large numbers of submarines and destroying  
or neutralizing them quickly. Such means are, of necessity, diverse and  
involve many complementary techniques and systems." Department of  
Defense Fiscal Year 1977 Program of Research, Development, Testing and  
Evaluation, Feb 1976, p. IV-67

VAdm. Robert Kaufman--"The U.S. possesses a significant  
technological lead over the Soviets in ASW sensors and weapons and in  
submarine quieting. This combination of factors results in a  
predominant U.S. lead in ASW capability." U.S. Congress. Senate.  
Committee on Armed Services. Fiscal Year 1979 Authorization for  
Military Procurement Hearings, Part 10, Apr 1977, p. 6756

Secretary of the Navy Graham Claytor--"The qualitative edge that we  
hold over the Soviets in both equipment and personnel is awesome, and  
our ability to orchestrate the many components [of our ASW team] into an  
effective submarine killer force has enormously improved in recent  
years." New York Times, 25 May 1978, p. A-6